

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 7272

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION SEPTEMBER 3

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REF: BEIRUT 7244

1. SUMMARY: HOPES CENTER ON SARKIS AND HIS UPCOMING DISCUSSIONS WITH LEADERS OF ALL FACTIONS. HOUGHTON AND MACK CONTINUE MEET CHRISTIAN LEADERS. FATAH MAKES CONCILIATORY STATEMENTS AND CALLS FOR ADHERENCE TO CAIRO ACCORDS. JUNBLATT AND EDDE EAT TOGETHER AND BOTH CRITICIZE RIGHTISTS AND SYRIANS. KATAEB SEEKS TO UNIFY RIGHTIST RANKS. GROUND SITUATION STABLE BUT BOMBARDMENTS CONTINUE IN SEVERAL AREAS. SYRIAN CLEARING ACTION IN SOUTH. SHELLING OF BEIRUT RESIDENTIAL AREAS REDUCED. END SUMMARY.

2. SARKIS. PRESS CONTINUES EXPRESS OPTIMISM SARKIS AND ASSAD MAY HAVE AGREED ON POLITICAL SOLUTION DURING SEPTEMBER 1 DISCUSSIONS, BUT SO FAR LITTLE LIGHT SHED ON CONTENTS OF TALKS. ONE SOURCE SAYS SYRIAN MILITARY PRESENCE WAS NOT EVEN RAISED BY SARKIS. L'ORIENT LE JOUR SAYS PRESIDENT-ELECT WILL SEE FRANGIE SEPTEMBER 6 AND SOON AFTERWARDS ARAFAT AND JUNBLATT. PROBLEM FOR LATTER TWO IS SAFE MEETING SITE. SARKIS MILITARY ADVISER, COLONEL MICHAEL NASSIF (AID DE CAMP OF LATE PRESIDENT CHEHAB), MET SEPTEMBER 2 WITH PLO'S SALAH KHALAF, AL'S GENERAL GHONEIM AND PHALANGIST ALEXANDER GEMAYEL TO DISCUSS OPENING ROAD TO PRESIDENTIAL PALACE AT BAABDA TO PUT SARKIS IN PLACE FOR CONTACTS WITH ALL PARTIES. BOTH KHALAF AND GENAYEL SAID AGREEABLE. AS INTERIM MEASURE, AN NAHAR SAYS SARKIS MAY HOLD COURT IN MUSEUM BUILDING NEAR CONFRONTATION LINE. KHALAF QUOTED AS SAYING PLO HAS FULL CONFIDENCE IN SARKIS. SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE KAMEL ASSAD QUOTED BY PHALANGIST RADIO TO EFFECT THAT SARKIS COULD TAKE OATH OF OFFICE AFTER ASSUMING POWER.

3. HOUGHTON AND MACK. AMERICAN ENVOYS ROBERT HOUGHTON AND DAVID MACK CONTINUE THEIR SAFARI IN RIGHTIST HELD AREA WITH SEPTEMBER 2 MEETINGS, INCLUDING FRANGIE AND CHAMOUN. ENVOYS EXPECTED MEET SEPTEMBER 3 WITH SARKIS AND PIERRE GEMAYEL.

4. PALESTINIANS CONCILIATORY. FATAH NUMBER TWO SALAH KHALAF (ABU IYAD), INTERVIEWED IN BEIRUT BY ROME DAILY CONFIDENTIAL

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II CORRIERE DELLA SERA, SAYS PALESTINIANS READY MAKE BROAD CONCESSIONS BUT SYRIANS WILL NOT EVEN DISCUSS MATTER. PRESS HERE HIGHLIGHTS INTERVIEW AS FIRST PUBLIC CONCILIATORY STATEMENT FROM PRO-EGYPTIAN WING OF FATAH LEADERSHIP. ABU IYAD SAYS PALESTINIANS READY RETREAT FROM MOUNTAINS, BEIRUT AND JEZZINE IN EXCHANGE FOR LIMITED SYRIAN RETREAT AND WILL RETIRE TO CAMPS AND RESPECT CAIRO ACCORD IF SYRIANS LEAVE LEBANON.

STATEMENT MAY REFLECT PLO HOPES CONVINCE SYRIANS NOT TO PURSUE MILITARY SOLUTION. HEAD OF PLO POLITICAL DEPARTMENT FAROUK KADDOUMI ALSO CALLS FOR STRICT ADHERENCE TO CAIRO ACCORDS IN LETTER TO UN SEC GEN WOLDHEIM REJECTING "ACCUSATIONS" MADE AGAINST PLO BY LEBANESE MISSION TO UN. AL MUHARRIR SAYS ARAFAT HAS ASKED ALGERIAN PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENNE TO MEDIATE PLO-SYRIAN DIFFERENCE.

5. LEBANESE LEFT. KAMAL JUNBLATT AND RAYMOND EDDE LUNCHE TOGETHER SEPTEMBER 2. EDDE ACCUSED FRANGIE OF FALSIFYING HISTORY IN HIS TREATMENT OF CAIRO ACCORDS. JUNBLATT SAID "DAMASCUS HAS MADE LEBANON THE BOOTY OF ALL ITS COVETOUSNESS." WE UNDERSTAND JUNBLATT TOLD EDDE HE REFUSED TO JOIN WITH MODERATES IN A COMMON FRONT BECAUSE "I AM THE KING OF THE LEFT." WE UNDERSTAND JUNBLATT MAY BE MAKING APPROACHES TO ISLAMIC GROUP.

6. ON THE RIGHT. IN WHAT MAY BE INDICATIVE OF KATAEB DESIRE TO UNIFY RIGHTIST RANKS (BY PLACATING CHAMOUN), PIERRE GEMAYEL ISSUES STATEMENT ASKING WHETHER "IT IS NOT TIME TO CONSIDER THE CAIRO ACCORD AS HAVING BECOME NULL DUE TO OBSTINATE PALESTINIAN REFUSAL TO APPLY ITS CLAUSES." BECHIR GEMAYEL ANNOUNCES PLANS TO: 1) ENLARGE NEW RIGHTIST MILITARY COMMITTEE TO INCLUDE ADDITIONAL MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS; 2) ESTABLISH INVENTORY OF QNRESOURCES TO LIBERATE LEBANON." WE HAVE REPORT THAT PIERRE GEMAYEL IS PROPOSING THAT KFOUR FRONT BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE MODERATE SUNNI, SHIITE AND DRUZE LEADERS. AL MUHARRIR SAYS NEUTRAL LEBANESE ARMY OFFICERS GENERALLY INDIGNANT WITH PROMINENT PRESENCE OF GENERAL HANA SAID AT PHALANGIST

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MILITARY RALLY AUGUST 28.

7. GROUND SITUATION. IN THE SOUTH, SYRIANS CONTINUE BOMBARD ROUM FROM JEZZINE. IN LEFTIST-HELD VILLAGE OF LIBBAYA WEST OF RASHAYAH SEPTEMBER 2, SYRIANS ARRESTED NUMBER OF COMMUNISTS AND ALF SUPPORTERS. PRESS REPORTS R TY#

STORY THAT SOME 30 RIGHTISTS HAVE ARRIVED IN SOUTH LEBANON VIA ISRAEL BY SE DTSM JOUNIEH. AS SAFIR SAYS ISRAELIS HAVE RECENTLY PATROLLED SEVERAL KILOMETERS INTO LEBANESE TERRITORY.

8. ELSEWHERE BOMBARDMENTS CONTINUE IN SEVERAL AREAS BUT THERE IS LITTLE GROUND MOVEMENT. IN THE NORTH,

TRIPOLI AND ZGHORTA CONTINUE MUTUAL BOMBARDMENTS AND
ARTILLERY IS ACTIVE IN KOURA AREA. SYRIANS SAID TO
HAVE SHELLLED PALESTINIAN CAMP OF NAHR EL-BARED NORTH
OF TRIPOLI. IN THE METN, AL MUHARRIR SAYS PALESTINIANS
ASSAULTED RIGHTIST POSITIONS IN VICINITY OF MROUJE NEAR
AINTOURA AND IN ZAAROUN/AIN SAFSAF AREA. SEVERAL
PEOPLE KILLED. METN ARTILLERY DUELS CONTINUE. IN
BEIRUT, THE DEVASTATED CITY CENTER REMAINS HOTLY
CONTESTED. SOME SHELLING OF RESIDENTIAL SECTORS. MOST
VIOLENT SUBURBS ARE TO SOUTHEAST. CHAMOUNIST ATTACK
FROM AIN EL-RUMMANEH ON CHYIAH REPULSED SEPTEMBER 2.
LANE

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